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* "ON THE FIRING LINE" *
*
* Property of Johnnie Speer *
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ON THE FIRING LINE

(Adlibb and easy)

CAST

COMIC ANY TYPE

STRAIGHT

GENERAL NEWCOMB CHARACTER

ONE CHORUS GIRL SMALL BIT

PROPS

One large gun (
One small gun (sure fire)
Gong off stage
Plenty of blanks
Newspaper
Table and chair

SETTING

The garden of General Newcomb's Southern Mansion.

ON THE FIRING LINE

STRAIGHT

(ENTERS AS THE GIRLS EXIT) How happy they are, and how miserable am I. I'm in debt up to my ears. I've got photo have money. This is the home of old General Newcomb. I'll black mail him. I'll tell him his son insulted my sister. Oh but I can't do that; I haven't got a sister. If I only had a sister. (COMIC ENTERS L. GO DOWN AND POINT FINGER IN HIS FACE AND WALK HIM BACK) You---you ----you---have a sister!

COMIC

(SAME BUS.) You---you---you are a liar!

STRAIGHT

No--no you've got a sister in your mind.

COMIC

If I lose my mind I lose my sister.

STRAIGHT

No, no I mean you've got 'em up here. (POINTS TO HEAD)

COMIC

No I did have 'em, but I put coal oil on 'em, and they all went away.

STRAIGHT

You've got a sister, and I've got a plan where I can make fifty thousand dollars, and I will give you fifty~~Q~~fifty.

COMIC

How much will that be?

STRAIGHT

Eight dollars.

COMIC

Make it six and half and I'll take it.

STRAIGHT

Do you know the General M

COMIC

No, but I know his son, Reggie. He did me a dirty trick in the army. He stabbed me with a bayonette.

STRAIGHT

Where did he stab you?

COMIC

Between the mess house and the parade grounds.

STRAIGHT

Would you like to get even with him?

COMIC

Yes.

STRAIGHT

Well, when the general comes here, I want you to tell him that his son insulted your sister in front of the post office at two

STRAIGHT

Come on over here. I'm the general. COMIC STANDS LOOKING AT STRAIGHT) Well go ahead! Go ahead! Go ahead! Ask me for somethi

COMIC

Give me a chaw of tobacco.

STRAIGHT

Ask me for fifty thousand dollars.

COMIC

Give me fifty thousand dollars.

STRAIGHT

Why what for?

COMIC

You son insulted my sister in front of the post hole office at four A. M. this P. M. and I want fifty thousand dollars.

STRAIGHT

(HANDS HIM EMPTY PALM) All right here it is. Now come with me and get ready to meet the General.

COMIC

Something tells me that I'm not going to be here long! (BOTH EXIT)

***** NUMBER ONE *****

GENERAL

(ENTERS AND SETS AT TABLE.)

COMIC

(ENTERS WITH STRAIGHT) Now you're sure I won't get hurt.

STRAIGHT

Of course not. The General is a real nice kind old man. There he is. Go ask him.

COMIC

(GOES OVER MARY MAEKNLY) General---

GENERAL

(DEEP VOICE) Well

COMIC

(RUNS AND JUMPS IN THE STRAIGHT'S ARMS) Hell yo! I'm sick. That son of a gun drew a knife on me.

HERCULES STRAIGHT

No he didn't. Go on and tell him. Go ahead.

COMIC

General, you grandmother insulted my son--

STRAIGHT

(CATCHES HIM) No no---not grandmother---sister---

COMIC

Oh yes. Your sister insulted my son---

STRAIGHT

No, no, your son insulted my sister.

COMIC

Oh yes. (GOES OVER AND LAYS FIST DOWN ON TABLE) General, your son insulted my sister in front of the post hole office at four A. M. this morning.

GENERAL

It's a lie!

COMIC

Well I know it. (TO STRAIGHT) See, he knows it.

STRAIGHT

No, no, go on over there, and tell him and demand money.

COMIC

General I demand money.

GENERAL

How much do you want?

COMIC

About six bits will do.

STRAIGHT

No, no, fifty thousand dollars!

COMIC

I demand fifty thousand dollars!

GENERAL

Well you won't get it. (SLAMS FIST DOWN)

COMIC

I didn't think I would.

STRAIGHT

Listen go over there to him and demand fifty thousand dollars or satisfaction.

COMIC

Will he give me that?

STRAIGHT

Yes, and plenty of it.

COMIC

I demand money of satisfaction.

GENERAL

Very well sir. (RISES) Choose your weapons!

COMIC

Huh? What's he mean?

STRAIGHT

He gave you satisfaction. That means he is going to fight you a duel to death.

COMIC

Oh you damn fool! Well, I choose cod fish balls.

STRAIGHT

Why cod-fish balls?

COMIC

They can't hurt you.

STRAIGHT

No, no you must fight him with an instrument of death. Well, have you made your choice?

COMIC

I'll fight him with swords.

STRAIGHT

No, you fool, he's the best swordsman in the country. With one thrust he will cut off your ear.

COMIC

No he won't; I'll keep my ear muffs on.

STRAIGHT

Another thrust of his trusty sword and he will cut out your diaphragm.

COMIC

He aint going to cut out my fryin' pan.

STRAIGHT

Another thrust of his trusty sword and he will cut put your appendix.

COMIC

He can't do it.

STRAIGHT

Why not?

COMIC

It's in my wife's name.

STRAIGHT

Well, any way you had better tell him that you choose pistols because the General doesn't know anything about pistols.

COMIC

Good! (GOES TO GENERAL) I choose pistols!

GENERAL

(LAUGHS) That suits me!

COMIC

(MUGS) Well, it don't suit me.

GENERAL

(XIS TO STRAIGHT) Captain, you will allow me five minutes for target practice, will you not?

STRAIGHT

Certainly.

COMIC

Yeah, go ahead and take five months if you want to.

GENERAL

(GOES OVER TO COMIC) As for you, I--Hate you. I hate you.

COMIC

I like you! (TICKLES HIM UNDER CHIN)

GENERAL

Bah! I'm going now and when I return I will shoot out your ha---ha---ha ha! (EXITS)

COMIC

Did you hear what he said?

STRAIGHT

What did he say?

COMIC

He's going now, but when he returns he will shoot out my ha ha ha!

***** NUMBER TWO *****

STRAIGHT

(CATCHES COMIC) Did you see the General?

COMIC

Yes, I saw him going back of the house with a high powered rifle under one arm, a pump gun under the other arm, revolver in each hand, and dragging a cannon with his teeth.

STRAIGHT

You're not afraid of him, are you? He can't shoot a gun.

COMIC

No, I'm not afraid of him.

GENERAL

(SHOOTS OFF STAGE. AND RINGS GONG)

STRAIGHT

(MUGS) I--I think he hit it.

COMIC

I know damn well he did. I thought you said he couldn't shoot a gun. (THEY ARGUE)

STRAIGHT

You're not afraid of him, are you?

COMIC

No, I'm not afraid of him.

GENERAL
(HITS GONG AND THEN SHOOTS)

COMIC
The son of a gun shoots backwards and hits it.

STRAIGHT
(TRIES TO EXPLAIN HOW IT HAPPENED) Well, you're not afraid of him, are you?

COMIC
No, but I'm afraid I'm going to get afraid.

GENERAL
(SHOOTS AND DOES NOT HIT GONG)

STRAIGHT AND COMIC
(DANCE AROUND) He missed! He missed! He missed!

GENERAL
(HITS GONG)

COMIC
That damn bullet had a round trip ticket!

***** NUMBER THREE *****

STRAIGHT
(ENTERS FOLLOWED BY COMIC AND GENERAL) Gentlemen, are you ready?

GENERAL
Yes we are--

COMIC
Not!

STRAIGHT
Now we will fight this duel according to the rules of Marquis Quesenbury. Where are the guns?

GENERAL
Daughter, bring forth the irons.

COMIC
Are we going to fight with flat irons?

DAUGHTER
(BRINGS OUT GUNS AND HANDS THEM TO GENERAL) WINKS AT COMIC. HE SMILES AND THEN SHE MAKES MOTION OF CUTTING HIS THROAT AND EXITS)

GENERAL
(WALKS DOWN TO COMIC) Choose your weapon. (HAS BIG GUN AND LITTLE GUN. CROSSES HANDS SO THAT THE COMIC WILL HAVE TO TAKE LITTLE GUN)

COMIC
That aint fair. Look at this little thing. What kind of a gun is this.?

GENERAL

It's a Colt.

COMIC

(POINTS TO GENERAL'S GUN) Must a been raised from that Horse Pistol!
I aint gonna fight unless I can have the big gun.

GENERAL

Oh very well. (THEY CHANGE GUNS) I can kill just as easily with the
small one.

STRAIGHT

Now, gentleman, I'll be second.

COMIC

I'll be first! (STARTS TO RUN)

STRAIGHT

Come back here. I am going to second the duel. You stand back to
back, I ount three paces, you turn and fire! Back to back!

COMIC

(BUTS THE GENERAL. WORK IT UP)

STRAIGHT

One---two---three--(COMIC WALKS BEHIND THE GENERAL AND BENDS DOWN
HAVING HIS GUN IN THE GENERAL'S RIBS)

COMIC

Boy, I'll shoot that button off his vest.

STRAIGHT

Enough. Do this right. Back to back. Now one two three--

CONIC

(HAS GUN IN GENERAL'S RIBS AND IS MAKING HIM LAUGH) I'm going to
tickle him, and make him laugh himself to death.

STRAIGHT

Back to back! Let's get this over with.

GENERAL

Yes, I am anxious to kill ~~some one~~. I want blood!

COMIC

Are you particular who you shoot.

GENERAL

I do not care.

COMIC

Then shoot him! (POINTS TO STRAIGHT) I got pains in my stomach!
I can't fight.

STRAIGHT

Oh you coward! I'm ashamed of you. Give me that gun. I'll fight
the duel. (TAKES GUN) Now you count.

COMIC

All right. One---two---three---

STRAIGHT

(SLIPS GUN TO COMIC AND EXITS)

COMIC

(SEES GUN YELLS AND DODGES)

GENERAL

What's the matter?

COMIC

I want to know if I can do the counting. The hero ran away.

GENERAL

Very well.

COMIC

Now is it all right if I stand six feet closer to you than you are to me.

GENERAL

No!

COMIC

Well, can I have the first two shots.

GENERAL

I should say not! Count!

COMIC

One two three four five six seven eight (EXITS)

GENERAL

(TURNS AND FIRES)

STRAIGHT

Oh what have you done.

GENERAL

I've killed him.

COMIC

(ENTERS STAGGERING)

STRAIGHT

Oh, are you shot?

COMIC

Half shot! (BEGINS LOOKING AROUND ON THE FLOOR)

STRAIGHT

What are you doing?

COMIC

Looking for a soft place to die. (LAYS DOWN) Well good bye old pal. Good bye General---I forgive you.

GENERAL

And I forgive you.

COMIC

(ADDIBES MOCK DRAMATIC STUFF AND FINALLY) General, before I die---before I die---grant me one little question---

GENERAL

Y
es yes?

COMIC

Tell me, General.

GENERAL

Yes yes!

COMIC

Where the hell did you get that face?

F I N A L E.